(b) whether the proposed visit could not materialise due to the sudden cancellation of the visit by the Russian Government; and

(c) if so, the reasons provided by the Russian Government therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) It was envisaged that the visit would include, *inter alia*, meetings of the Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister with the leadership of the Russian Federation including the President. Since mutually convenient time for all these meetings on the dates proposed for the visit could not be found, it was decided to defer the visit by mutual consent of both sides.

Comparison of Gujarat with Jammu and Kashmir by US

267. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Deccan Chronicle on the 4th October, 2002 under the caption "Clinton compares Gujarat to J.K.: US Commission says Sangh Parivar responsible for religious hatred";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to obliterate the widespread impression prevalent in the foreign countries that India has not done enough to ensure the protection of minorities?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Yes.

(b) Government reject any comparison between Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir. The U.S. Commission on International regligious Freedom is a non-official body mandated by the U.S. Congress. Government consider its report part of the internal process of a foreign government. We reject any interference in India's internal affairs. It is well known that the Constitution of India guarantees equal religious, social and political rights to all its citizens, including minorities.

(c) Various official and non-official bodies in and outside the country regularly publicise the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the constitutional and other rights of its citizens. Representatives of news agencies and other media organizations are also kept briefed on the subject on a regular basis.

Supply of arms to Pakistan by US

268. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US has been supplying arms to Pakistan during the last one year in the name of fighting terrorism;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether India has noticed that these arms have been used by Pakistani militants against India;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether India has brought this to the notice of US Government; and

(f) if so, the US response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes. During the past year, the United States has cleared a number of defence items for sale to Pakistan in the context of Pakistan's involvement in the U.S. led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Major items reportedly include Aerostat L-88 radar system and spares (valued at US$155 million), 6 used 130-C aircraft with engine upgrades (valued at US$75 million), Cobra helicopter gunships (valued at US$73 million) and spare parts and components for existing F-16 aircrafts.

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) Government has conveyed to the United States that it must remains conscious of the impact of U.S.- Pakistan military relations on India's security interests. The United States has expressed understanding for our concerns and has also conveyed that it is not considering sales of defence equipment such F-16 aircrafts to Pakistan.